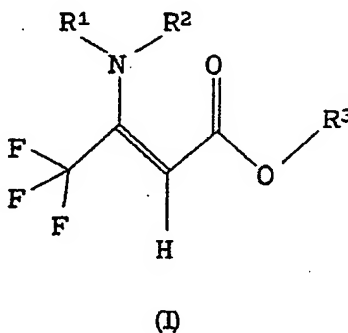


IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A process for preparing 3-amino-4,4,4-trifluoro-crotonic esters of the formula (I) ~~or the E/Z isomers or tautomeric forms thereof~~



or the E/Z-isomers or tautomeric forms thereof wherein

where

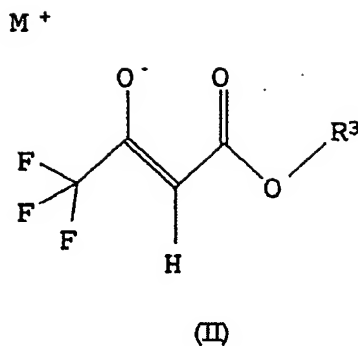
R^1 and R^2 are each independently hydrogen, an optionally substituted linear C_1 - C_4 -alkyl radical or an optionally substituted benzyl radical

and

R^3 is methyl or ethyl, comprising

characterized in that

a) reacting an alkyl trifluoroacetate ~~is reacted~~ with an alkyl acetate of the formula $CH_3-CO-OR^3$ and an alkali metal alkoxide to give an enolate of a trifluoroacetoacetic ester of the formula (II)



where wherein

$M = Na$ or K

and

R^3 is as defined above,

and subsequently

b) ~~allowing~~ reacting the alkali metal enolate of the trifluoroacetoacetic ester from stage a) without further purification ~~is allowed to react~~ directly with an amine of the formula NHR^1R^2 , where R^1 and R^2 are each as defined above, in the presence of an acid to provide ~~give~~ the 3-amino-4,4,4-trifluorocrotonic ester.

2. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said ~~the~~ alkyl trifluoroacetates and alkyl acetates ~~used~~ are the corresponding methyl or ethyl esters.

3. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~or 2, characterized in that,~~ in stage a), the molar ratio of alkyl trifluoroacetate to alkyl acetate is set to from 1:1 to 1:5.

4. (currently amended) The process according to ~~any of claims~~ claim 1, wherein ~~to 3, characterized in that~~, from 0.9 to 3.0 mol of the alkali metal alkoxide are present used per mole of alkyl trifluoroacetate.

5. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that~~ the alkali metal alkoxide used is selected from the group consisting of sodium methoxide, sodium ethoxide, potassium methoxide and ~~or~~ potassium ethoxide.

6. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that~~ the reaction in stage a) is carried out at ~~temperatures~~ a temperature of from 0 to 100°C.

7. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, further comprising removing ~~any of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that, on completion of stage a)~~, excess alkyl acetate and/or alcohol upon completion of stage a) ~~is removed~~.

8. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ the amine NHR^1R^2 ~~is used~~ in stage b) is as a free base in anhydrous form.

9. (currently amended) The process of ~~any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the amine NHR^1R^2 ~~is used~~ in stage b) is an ~~in~~ aqueous solution.

10. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ the amine NHR^1R^2 ~~is used~~ in stage b) is in the form of a salt selected from the group consisting of hydrochloride, sulfate, nitrate, formate and ~~or~~ acetate.

11. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 10, characterized in that~~ the amine NHR^1R^2 ~~used~~ is selected from the group consisting of ammonia, methylamine, ethylamine, benzylamine, dimethylamine and ~~or~~ diethylamine, or a salt of these amines.

12. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 11, characterized in that~~ from 1.0 to 10.0 mol ~~mol, in particular from 1.1 to 4.0 mol,~~ of amine are provided ~~used~~ per mole of alkyl trifluoroacetate.

13. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 12, characterized in that~~ the acid ~~is used~~ in stage b) is present in an amount of from 1.0 to 10.0 mol per mole of alkyl trifluoroacetate.

14. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 13, characterized in that~~ the acid ~~used~~ is acetic acid and/or hydrochloric acid.

15. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that~~ reaction stage b) is carried out at temperatures of from 20 to 200°C ~~200°C, in particular from 50 to 160°C.~~

16. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 15, characterized in that~~ the water of reaction is removed continuously during the reaction of stage b).

17. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 16, characterized in that~~ the reaction of stage b) is carried out in the presence of an organic hydrocarbon as an azeotroping agent.

18. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 17, characterized in that~~ the azeotroping agent ~~used~~ is a solvent selected from the group consisting of hexane, octane, cyclohexane, methylcyclohexane, benzene, toluene and a xylene ~~or the xylenes.~~

19. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 18, characterized in that~~ the reaction mixture is worked up by extraction and subsequent distillation.

20. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein ~~any of claims 1 to 19, characterized in that~~ stages a) and b) are carried out successively in the same reaction vessel.

21. (new) The process of claim 1, wherein from 1.1 to 4.0 mol of amine is provided per mole of alkyl trifluoroacetate.

22. (new) The process of claim 1, wherein reaction stage b) is carried out at temperatures of from 50 to 160°C.